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Chicago: Highlights of
Its History

(1953)





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CHICAGO

*Highlights
of its History*



CHICAGO HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Lincoln Park at North Avenue, Chicago 14

ILLINOIS HISTORICAL SURVEY

First Printing, 1953
Second Printing, 1959

Mestrovic Indian

In 1926 Ivan Mestrovic, a Yugoslav sculptor, visited the United States, and was commissioned by the Committee of the Ferguson Fund to execute two statues. After considerable study he chose Indian subjects—The Bowman and The Spearman. The statues were cast in bronze in Zagreb, and shipped to Chicago for unveiling in 1929. They are placed on either side of the Congress Street entrance to Grant Park. The northernmost of the two, The Bowman, is shown in silhouette on the front cover.

CHICAGO

High Lights of Its History

DISCOVERY, 1673

In the spring of 1673 seven white men set out from the mission of St. Ignace, on the mainland near Mackinac Island, to find and explore the Mississippi River. They hoped that the great stream, which they knew only by rumor, would offer a highway to the fabulous riches of the Orient. Father Jacques Marquette, French-born missionary of the Jesuit order, and Louis Jolliet, Canadian explorer and map-maker, led the expedition; the other five were voyageurs, or canoemen. The explorers followed the Fox and Wisconsin rivers to the Mississippi, and then floated with the current as far as the mouth of the Arkansas. There, satisfied that the river emptied into the Gulf of Mexico, and fearing to encounter enemies if they traveled farther, they turned back.

On their return trip Marquette and Jolliet, instead of re-tracing their previous route, paddled up the Illinois River. Near the present city of Ottawa they found a great Indian village. There Marquette preached the gospel and promised the friendly savages that he would return. Led by Indian guides, the explorers ascended the Des Plaines and crossed the low-lying ground between that river and the South Branch of the Chicago River. As the leaves were beginning to turn they floated into the waters of Lake Michigan and pointed their canoes toward Green Bay. They were the first white men to lay eyes on the site of the future city.

THE MISSION OF THE GUARDIAN ANGEL, 1696-1700

For a quarter of a century after 1673 Frenchmen frequented the site of Chicago. Marquette, keeping his promise to the Indians of the Illinois valley, spent the winter there in

1674-75. La Salle, Tonty, Joutel, and other traders and explorers used the portage repeatedly on their journeys to the Illinois and Mississippi rivers. Near the end of the century a large band of Miami Indians, seeking refuge from the implacable Iroquois, established two villages at Chicago, one on the south side of the main river between the forks and the lake, the other two miles away on the South Branch. There, in 1696, Father Francois Pinet, a Jesuit missionary, founded the Mission of the Guardian Angel.

For four years, with one interruption, Father Pinet sought to save the souls of his savage wards. The task, however, was a hopeless one, and in 1700 the French abandoned the mission. From that date until the early 1780's, when Jean Baptiste Point Sable established a trading post on the north bank of the Chicago River near the lake, the history of Chicago is a void. For eighty years hostile Indians blocked the natural passage between the Great Lakes and the Mississippi. Traders must have slipped through from time to time, but no traces of their activities are to be found in the surviving records.

THE TREATY OF GREENVILLE, 1795

The scene shifts from the swampy shore of Lake Michigan to Fort Greenville in western Ohio. There, in the summer of 1795, the tribes gather to make their peace with General Anthony Wayne—"Mad Anthony" of the Revolution—who had routed them at the Battle of Fallen Timbers on August 20, 1794. The treaty, concluded August 10, 1795, opens most of the present State of Ohio to white settlement, but stipulates that certain tracts in the Indian country to the westward may be used by the United States for forts and portages. One of these is described as follows: "one piece of land six miles square, at the mouth of Chicago river, emptying into the southwest end of lake Michigan." Thus title to the site of the future city passes to the United States.

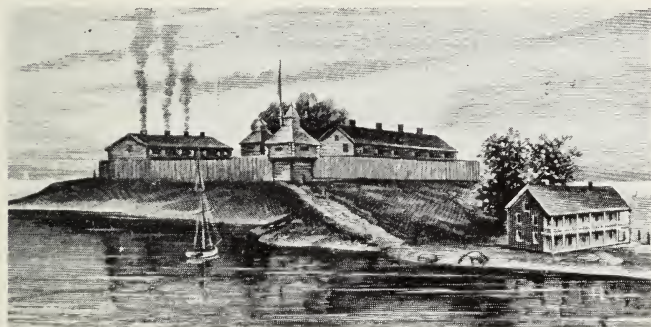
The comment of Milo M. Quaife in *Chechagou: From In-*

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In 1803
Survey

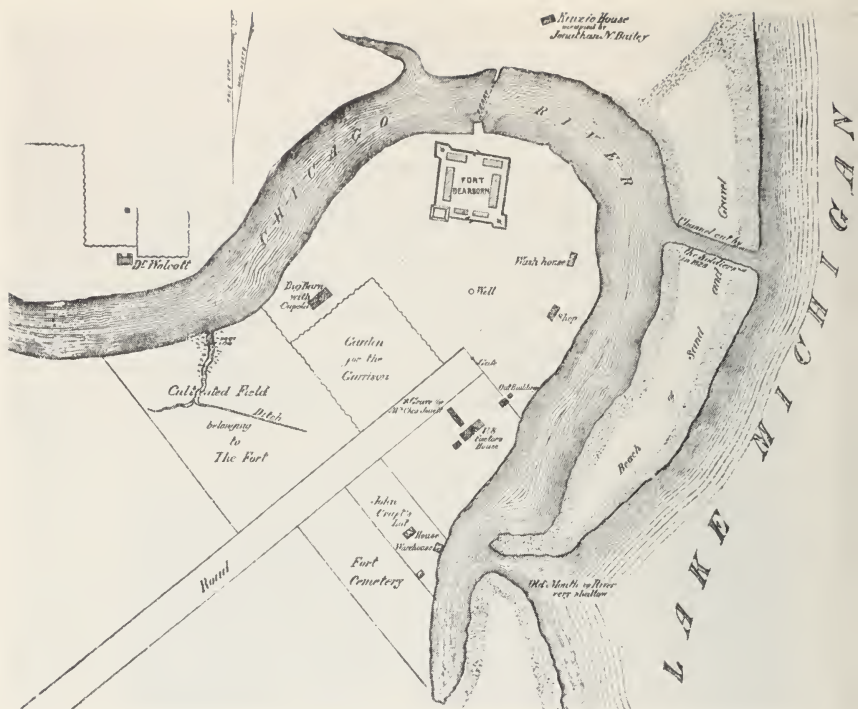
dian Wigwam to Modern City is pertinent: "From every point of view, this is the most momentous real estate transaction in the history of Chicago. It embraced an area which today the fabled wealth of the Indies would scarcely suffice to purchase, and it directly prepared the way for the subsequent founding of Fort Dearborn. Although the tract was never formally surveyed, its approximate boundaries are easily indicated. From Fullerton Avenue on the north to Thirty-first Street on the south, and from the lake westward to Forty-eighth Avenue [Cicero Avenue]; such were the dimensions of Mad Anthony's purchase."

THE FIRST FORT DEARBORN, 1803-1812

Eight years passed before the United States moved to erect a fort at the mouth of the Chicago River. Early in 1803 the War Department made the decision. With the summer Lt. James Strode Swearingen led a detachment of the First Infantry overland from Detroit while Capt. John Whistler, who would command the new post, traveled by water. The troops reached their destination on the afternoon of August 17 and set to work at once building shelters and a stockade. A year later Fort Dearborn, named in honor of the Secretary of War, stood complete.



The first Fort Dearborn
Erected 1803, destroyed August 16, 1812



*Mouth of the Chicago River in 1830
Showing the second Fort Dearborn and surroundings*

At this time the Chicago River made a sharp bend to the south just east of the present Michigan Avenue bridge and emptied into the lake at the approximate location of Madison Street. On elevated ground in the bend of the river stood the stockade, with blockhouses at the northwestern and southeastern corners. The main gateway, in the middle of the south side, looked down the future Michigan Avenue. Inside the enclosure were barracks for officers and men, a storehouse, and a stone powder magazine. A visitor in 1809 characterized the fort as "the neatest and best wooden garrison in the country."

Year after year, little happened at Fort Dearborn. A ship with trade goods called annually, and mail came at long intervals. Hunting, fishing, and games gave some occupation

to the troops, but for the most part, life was almost intolerably monotonous.

But with the spring of 1812, the situation changed. Word reached the outpost on the Chicago River that war with Great Britain was imminent. Indians, sullen and aggressive, collected at the fort. In mid-July a runner arrived with official notice that war had been declared.

On August 9 a messenger brought Capt. Nathan Heald, who had replaced Captain Whistler in 1810, an order directing him to evacuate Fort Dearborn and withdraw with the garrison to Fort Wayne. Preparations began at once. On the 13th Capt. William Wells, with thirty friendly Miami warriors, arrived at Chicago to accompany the troops on their long and dangerous journey. The next day Heald distributed the goods of the government store to the Indians; the garrison liquor and the surplus arms and ammunition he destroyed.

At 9:00 o'clock on the morning of August 15 the stockade gate swung open. Captain Wells and some of his Miami headed the procession that emerged. The garrison followed, and after them, the women and children and a dozen militiamen. The remainder of the Miami brought up the rear. The Potawatomi surrounding the fort had promised an escort, but the few who appeared soon deserted.

The column moved south, taking a route between the lake and a row of low sand hills a hundred yards from the water. After covering a mile and a half, Captain Wells discovered that the Indians were lying in ambush behind the sand hills. Heald ordered his men to charge. They gained the ridge, but they were hopelessly outnumbered, and doomed to defeat in the confused fighting that followed. In thirty minutes more than half of the whites lost their lives. When promised that the survivors would be spared, Heald surrendered. In spite of the promise, some of the wounded were put to death, and several of the prisoners were tortured.

On the day after the massacre the Indians set fire to the

fort and left for their villages, taking their captives with them. Only smoldering ruins, with mutilated bodies in the distance, marked the site of the first Fort Dearborn.

TOWN AND CITY, 1833-1837

A region inhabited only by Indians and a few hunters and trappers needs no government. But if a sizable number of permanent settlers are to live together in harmony, some agency must perform certain services for the general welfare—locate and maintain roads, settle disputes, arrest and punish law-breakers, and levy taxes to cover costs. As population increases and people become more dependent upon each other, government assumes more and more duties, at the same time that individual communities—towns and villages—demand a greater share in the control of their own affairs.

In Illinois, as in most of the United States, this development has taken shape in successive forms of government. In 1800 a region occupied by only a few hundred settlers was made a part of Indiana Territory; in 1809 it had grown populous enough to be set apart as Illinois Territory; in 1818 it became a state. Concurrently, counties were being formed to provide local government, while within the counties, towns and cities came into existence.

The southern half of Illinois was well settled while Indians still occupied the northern part of the state. Cook County was not organized until January 15, 1831. Even though its extent was five times as large as it is today, its population consisted of the two companies of infantry stationed at Fort Dearborn, rebuilt in 1816, and a few scattered pioneers.

But after the Black Hawk War (1832) removed the Indian menace, settlers poured in. In the summer of 1833 those who lived in the vicinity of Chicago decided that they needed their own government. Of the thirteen voters, twelve favored incorporating as a town.

On August 10, 1833, five trustees were elected. Two days



*The Saloon Building, Lake and Clark streets
Meeting place of the first City Council*

later they chose T. J. V. Owen, one of their number, president. The settlement was still so small that they waited until November 7 to adopt a municipal code. The first ordinance established the town limits—Ohio Street on the north, Jackson Street on the south, Jefferson and Cook streets on the west, and on the east, the lake as far as the river, and south of that, State Street.

Within three years a fast-growing population demanded the larger powers offered by incorporation as a city. Delegates from each of Chicago's three districts met on November 24, 1836, and decided to petition the state legislature for a city charter. At the same time, they appointed a committee to prepare a draft. This, substantially, was the charter adopted by the legislature on March 4, 1837.

At the first election under the new form of organization the voters chose six aldermen, one for each ward, and elected William B. Ogden mayor. The mayor received a salary of \$500 a year; the aldermen served without pay. A census, taken July 1, 1837, gave the young city a population of 4,170.

CANAL AND RAILROAD, 1848

As early as 1674 Louis Jolliet foresaw that someday a canal between the Chicago and Des Plaines rivers would connect the Great Lakes and the Gulf of Mexico. However, no practical steps were taken to realize his vision until the War of 1812 proved the need for a route over which forces and supplies could be transported to the northern frontier. In 1816 the federal government acquired title, from the Indians, to the land along the proposed waterway. During the 1820's Congress gave the State of Illinois the right to build the canal and made a grant of land to help defray the cost of construction. In 1835, when the legislature pledged the full credit of the state, the canal commissioners borrowed enough money to begin work.

Ground was broken on July 4, 1836. For a time the work proceeded rapidly. But the Panic of 1837 struck Illinois with devastating effect. Work on the canal slowed, then stopped. Not until 1845 could the state raise sufficient money to resume work, but this time the job was pushed through to the finish. On April 10, 1848, the first boat, the *General Fry*, passed through the canal to the lake. The *Chicago Daily Democrat* of April 11, described the occasion:

"The boat from Lockport, the *Gen. Fry*, decorated with flags and crowded with ladies and gentlemen, was locked through the river at five o'clock, amid the cheers of the assembled crowds. The propeller, *A. Rossiter*, which took down a full load of passengers from the city, immediately after took her in tow, and at half past seven o'clock the *Gen. Fry* was floating in Lake Michigan.

"As the boats passed through the city they were greeted with cheering, which was renewed at the different bridges, and points at which the citizens were collected. Altogether there was considerable excitement in the city, and all appeared rejoiced at the realization of the long-promised event—the opening of the Illinois and Michigan Canal."

The canal was a powerful factor in the development of



*Railroading as Chicago knew it in the 'eighties
Thirty-four hours to New York and no change of cars!*

Chicago. Population jumped from 20,000 in 1848 to 75,000 in 1854, and commerce expanded at the same rate. The produce of the Illinois Valley, formerly shipped to St. Louis, now poured into Chicago, while merchandise from the East passed down the canal to the river towns and from them to the interior settlements.

Yet the canal was doomed from the beginning. Six months after it was opened three sentences in the *Chicago Daily Democrat* for October 26, 1848, foretold its fate: "Yesterday the locomotive with cars attached, took its first start, and ran out a distance of five miles upon the road. A number of

gentlemen rode out upon the cars.—Everything worked well, and all parties appeared satisfied with the road so far.”

The railroad was the Galena & Chicago Union, parent line of the present North Western system. When it first started to operate, its tracks extended only to what is now Oak Park. In early January, 1850, they reached Elgin, and on August 2, 1852, Rockford. By that time the Illinois Central and the Chicago and Rock Island were both under construction. Before the end of the decade eleven trunk lines ran to or from Chicago and carried merchandise far exceeding in tonnage that carried on the canal. Already the city was the railroad center of the country—a position which it has held ever since.

THE FIRST REPUBLICAN CONVENTION, 1860

Early in May, 1860, workmen hurried to finish a large, two-story frame building on the southeast corner of Lake and Market streets, now Lake Street and Wacker Drive. Already named the Wigwam, it was being built to house the Republican National Convention—the second to be held by that party and the first national political convention to meet in Chicago.



*The Wigwam, Lake and Market Street (now Wacker Drive)
Here Lincoln was nominated in 1860*

The delegates, jostled by thousands of spectators, met for the first time on May 16. On the 18th came the nominations: for President, William H. Seward of New York, William L. Dayton of New Jersey, Simon Cameron of Pennsylvania, Salmon P. Chase and John McLean of Ohio—and Abraham Lincoln of Illinois. On the first ballot Seward led with 173½ votes. Lincoln—considered only a favorite son—stood next with 102. With the second ballot Seward rose to 184½ votes; Lincoln jumped to 181. Before the third roll call was finished Lincoln had 231½ votes, with only 233 necessary for nomination. An Ohio delegate jumped on a chair and announced that his state was changing four votes from Chase to Lincoln.

Cheers rocketed through the Wigwam, swelling to a roar so loud that the first guns of a salute, fired from a cannon on the roof, could hardly be heard. Outside the building men embraced each other, shouted for joy, formed impromptu parades, and crowded the barrooms. The Republican party had nominated its first President, and started a great American on the road to immortality.

THE FIRE, 1871

On October 8, 1871, the 335,000 inhabitants of Chicago enjoyed a warm, bright Sunday. Many, however, would have preferred a less pleasant day. Almost no rain had fallen for three months, the trees had shed their leaves, the wells were dry. The night before, when a planing mill on Canal Street had caught fire, four square blocks were destroyed, and a disaster was barely averted. Another time catastrophe might follow.

The alarm came in soon after 9:00 on Sunday evening. A cowbarn in the rear of Patrick O'Leary's cottage at 137 De Koven Street was ablaze. By the time the first fire engines arrived the flames had spread to nearby buildings; in an incredibly short time the fire was beyond control. Before midnight it had jumped the South Branch of the Chicago River and was moving rapidly in a northeasterly direction. By

1:30 on the morning of October 9 the courthouse and other buildings in the center of the business district were aflame. An hour later, and buildings north of the main channel of the river were crumbling. The waterworks at Chicago Avenue and Pine Street (now Michigan Avenue) was abandoned at 2:30, although the water tower, on the west side of the street, escaped with little damage and stands today as the only structure in the city to survive the fire.

During Monday, October 9, the fire swept the North Side as far as Fullerton Avenue (then the city limits), and completed the destruction of the business district. By late afternoon, however, it had spent itself. Rain, beginning soon after midnight, put an end to the destruction.

In a little more than two full days the heart of the city had been reduced to smoking ruins. The business district was gone; so was the North Side. Property valued at \$200,000,000 had become rubble; 90,000 people were homeless; 300 were dead. Chicago, it was said on all sides, could never recover.

Yet the forecast turned out to be wrong. Before the ruins had cooled men made plans to build again. Within two years ground in the business section was worth more than the same land, with buildings on it, had been worth before the fire. By 1875 few traces of the catastrophe could be found. The people of Chicago had demonstrated that courage, determination, and faith in the future could overcome one of the worst disasters ever to befall an American city.

THE SKYSCRAPER, 1884

In the year 1883 a prominent Chicago architect, W. L. B. Jenney, began to plan a building which the Home Insurance Company of New York intended to erect on the northeast corner of Adams and La Salle streets. Without, perhaps, realizing the significance of what he was doing, Jenney decided upon a new method of construction. In all earlier buildings the walls had carried the weight of the entire structure. As buildings rose in height the piers at the ground



*Home Insurance Building, Adams and La Salle streets
This first skyscraper revolutionized urban life*

level became ever thicker. Ten stories, the practical limit, called for walls four feet thick at the base—a thickness that reduced valuable rental space and cut down the amount of daylight admitted by the windows. Jenney, in the building on his drawing boards, proposed to erect an iron skeleton of columns, girders, and beams, and on that skeleton hang not only the floors and roof, but the walls themselves. Thus the walls would be no thicker at the base than at the roof. The owners could have as many windows as they wanted—could have, in fact, walls entirely of glass—and at the same time save valuable space formerly given over to heavy masonry.

Jenney was planning the first skyscraper. The Home Insurance Building, completed in 1884, revolutionized the construction industry. As one eminent authority has put it: “The skyscraper is far and away the most important architectural achievement of America, her great gift to the art of building. In its train has come the most brilliant era of structural engineering that the world has ever known.”

The skyscraper also revolutionized urban life. By enabling architects to build higher than they had ever dreamed of, it made it possible for far larger numbers of people to live and work in limited areas. The social consequences pose problems that have not yet been solved.

THE HAYMARKET RIOT, 1886

In the spring of 1886 many Chicagoans were uneasy. Labor unions were campaigning for the eight-hour day (with ten hours' pay), and so many social revolutionaries of European origin had attached themselves to the movement that it had become a class struggle. Employers and conservatives feared bloodshed, and looked for it to come on May 1, when many unions planned to strike for shorter hours.

May 1, however, passed in peace, though thousands struck as they had threatened. The first real violence took place two days later, when a fight between strikers and strike-breakers took place at the McCormick Harvester plant.

The police, hastily summoned, attacked the rioting strikers, killing one and wounding several others.

The following day, May 4, handbills calling workingmen to a mass meeting at the Haymarket, Randolph Street between Desplaines and Halsted, were circulated. The meeting was called "to denounce the latest atrocious act of the police, the shooting of our fellow-workmen yesterday afternoon," and some of the notices urged workers to come armed. Contrary to expectations, only a small crowd appeared, and those present gathered around a wagon on Desplaines Street rather than in the Haymarket itself. Speakers harangued them for an hour and a half. As the meeting neared its end, a police column of 180 men suddenly appeared, marched to the wagon, and halted. The commanding officer ordered the meeting to break up. As the dwindling crowd hesitated, a sputtering bomb dropped near the first rank of police, and an instant later exploded. Nearly half of the officers fell with wounds, some fatal. Those unhurt closed ranks and opened fire on the crowd, causing casualties that were never accurately determined.

The city—in fact, the entire country—saw in the bomb the beginning of a campaign of terror on the part of wild-eyed socialists and anarchists, and demanded that the agitators be punished to the limit of the law. The police arrested as many as they could find, and a grand jury indicted thirty-one for murder or conspiracy to murder. Of these, eight stood trial. All were found guilty. For seven, the jury fixed the penalty at death; the eighth was to be imprisoned for fifteen years. Appeals to the State Supreme Court and the United States Supreme Court were unsuccessful.

On November 10, 1887, twenty-four hours before the executions were to be carried out, Louis Lingg, one of the condemned men, committed suicide in his cell. That evening the Governor of Illinois commuted the sentences of Samuel Fielden and Michael Schwab to life imprisonment. The next day the hangman sent Albert R. Parsons, Adolph Fischer, George Engel, and August Spies to their deaths.

REVENGE!

Workingmen, to Arms!!!

Your masters sent out their bloodhounds — the police —; they killed six of your brothers at McCormicks this afternoon. They killed the poor wretches, because they, like you, had the courage to disobey the supreme will of your bosses. They killed them, because they dared ask for the shortening of the hours of toil. They killed them to show you, "Free American Citizens!", that you must be satisfied and contented with whatever your bosses condescend to allow you, or you will get killed!

You have for years endured the most abject humiliations; you have for years suffered unmeasurable iniquities; you have worked yourself to death; you have endured the pangs of want and hunger; your Children you have sacrificed to the factory-lords — in short: You have been miserable and obedient slave all these years: Why? To satisfy the insatiable greed, to fill the coffers of your lazy believing master? When you ask them now to lessen your burden, he sends his bloodhounds out to shoot you, kill you!

If you are men, if you are the sons of your grand sires, who have shed their blood to free you, then you will rise in your might, Hercules, and destroy the hideous monster that seeks to destroy you. To arms we call you, to arms!

Your Brothers.

Rache! Rache! Arbeiter, zu den Waffen!

Arbeitendes Volk, heute Nachmittag mordeten die Bluthunde Eurer Ausbeuter 6 Eurer Brüder draußen bei McCormick's. Warum mordeten sie die Leiden? Weil sie den Muth hatten, mit dem Volk unzufrieden zu sein, weil sie Eure Ausbeuter ihnen beschreiben haben. Sie fordereten Mord, man antwortete ihnen mit Blut, eingedenk der Thatsache, daß man damit das Volk am schlauesten zum Schweigen bringen kann! Diese, viele Jahre habt Ihr alle Demüthigungen ohne Widerstand ertragen, habt Euch vom frühen Morgen bis zum späten Abend geschunden, habt Entbehrungen jeder Art ertragen, habt Eure Kinder selbst geopfert — Alles, um die Schatzkammern Eurer Herren zu füllen, Alles für sie! Und jetzt, wo Ihr vor sie hinterleitet, und sie ersucht, Eure Blüde etwas zu erleichtern, da drögen sie zum Dank für Eure Opfer ihre Bluthunde, die Polizei, auf Euch, um Euch mit Bleikugeln von der Unzufriedenheit zu kuriren. Sklaven, wir fragen und beschreiben Euch bei Allem, was Euch heilig und werth ist, nicht diesen schrecklichen Mord, den man heute an Euren Brüdern beging, und vielmehr morgen schon an Euch begreifen wird. Arbeitendes Volk, Hercules, Du bist am Scheitern angelangt. Wofür entzweihst Du Dich? Für Sklaverei und Hunger, oder für Freiheit und Brod? Entzweihst Du Dich für das Letztere, dann säume keinen Augenblick; dann, Volk, zu den Waffen! Vernichtung den werthlosen Feinden, die sich Deine Herrscher nennen! Höchstnützliche Vernichtung ihnen — das auch Deine Rettung sein! Denn der Feind, deren Blut den Weg zum Fortschritt, zur Freiheit und zur Menschlichkeit gebahnt — und strebe, ihre Mordthätigkeit zu weichen!

Eure Brüder.

The "Call to Arms" that preceded the Haymarket riot

From the beginning many believed that the Haymarket rioters were being tried for holding unpopular opinions rather than for the crimes with which they were charged. The men who shared this conviction—and their number included some of Chicago's most respected citizens—organized the defense of the rioters and, after the verdict, appealed to the Governor for clemency. After the executions, they continued their efforts in behalf of the three men still in prison. John P. Altgeld, elected Governor in 1892, pardoned them six months after he took office.

THE WORLD'S COLUMBIAN EXPOSITION, 1893

As the year 1892 approached the feeling grew that the United States should commemorate the 400th anniversary of the discovery of America. Sentiment favored a great international exposition. But where? Spokesmen for Chicago descended on Congress. The city was the melting pot of the nation; it had hotel rooms to accommodate the visitors; in Jackson Park, as yet undeveloped, it had an unrivalled location. With a pledge of \$10,000,000 to back up their arguments, the Chicagoans carried the day.

Daniel H. Burnham, Chicago architect, took charge of construction. Enlisting the aid of the most famous architects, sculptors, and landscape designers in the country, Burnham transformed a swamp into fairyland. When the fair opened on May 1, 1893 an army of visitors saw great buildings of classic form in lustrous white, statues, fountains, and a sprawling and raucous amusement section. There were the caravels (replicas of course) in which Columbus had sailed to the New World, the giant Ferris Wheel, the Streets of Cairo and the Irish Village, 50,000 roses in bloom on the Wooded Island, Russian jades, Sevres vases, Chinese lacquer—products, inventions, and freaks assembled by forty-six foreign nations and most of the states of the Union.

In the six months of its course the Exposition attracted 27,539,000 visitors—almost half the total number of people



*Looking toward the Agricultural Building and Machinery Hall
World's Columbian Exposition, 1893*

The Ferris Wheel—Marvel of the Midway



living in the United States. Overnight Chicago became the best known city in the world. On its visitors the Exposition had a profound effect: millions remembered a few days spent in the White City and on the Midway Plaisance as the greatest experience of their lives. The sight of new inventions, opening what seemed to be limitless avenues of progress, gave the entire world a lift of spirit. Perhaps the Exposition had its most far-reaching effect on architecture, for by reminding millions of the beauties of the classic form it started a trend that was to last for a generation.

THE IROQUOIS THEATER FIRE, 1903

The Iroquois Theater—new, beautifully decorated, and believed to be completely fireproof—had a capacity crowd for the matinee on December 30, 1903. Children were out of school for the Christmas holidays, and many parents had planned parties so that the youngsters might see Eddie Foy in "Mr. Bluebeard." It was a joyous occasion.

Then, without warning, disaster struck. Midway in the play a wisp of smoke curled from the flies. A few seconds later a flimsy piece of scenery burst into flames. Eddie Foy stepped to the footlights, asked the audience to be calm, urged the orchestra to play. Behind him a skylight crashed to the floor and a sudden draft blew flame and smoke from the stage. The crowd rushed for the exits, many of which were locked. In the darkness—the lights went out soon after the fire started—men, women, and children knocked each other down, tried to climb over prostrate bodies, and smothered to death. Firemen and police smashed down doors, rushed in with torches, and found piles of dead bodies. Hardened reporters sickened at the sight. In fifteen minutes 596 people—twice as many as died during the Chicago Fire—lost their lives.

The victims of the Iroquois Theater fire died needlessly but not in vain. In Europe as well as the United States the tragedy led to the adoption of safety measures that have effectively prevented similar disasters.

Iroquois Theatre

ABSOLUTELY
FIREPROOF

RANDOLPH Bet. DEARBORN and STATE STS., CHICAGO
IROQUOIS THEATRE CO., PROPRIETORS
WILL J. DAVIS, and HARRY J. POWERS,
Resident Owners and Managers

The
Iroquois

6th Week Beginning Monday, December 28th, 1903

EVERY EVENING INCLUDING SUNDAY

WEDNESDAY AND SATURDAY AND
NEW YEARS DAY MATINEES

KLAW & ERLANGER Present

MR. BLUE BEARD

The Great Spectacular Entertainment from Theatre Royal,
Drury Lane, London.

By J. HICKORY WOOD and ARTHUR COLLINS.
Adapted for the American Stage by JOHN J. McNALLY.

The Lyrics, unless otherwise indicated, by J. Cheever Goodwin.
Music, unless otherwise indicated, by Frederick Solomon.

Ballets by Ernest D'Auban.

Produced under Stage Direction of Herbert Gresham and Ned Wayburn.
Business Direction of Jos. Brooks. Edwin H. Price, Manager.

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES, MUSIC AND INCIDENTS.

ACT I.

Scene 1—The Market Place on the Quay, near Bagdad. (Bruce Smith.)
Mustapha plots to separate Selim and Fatima and sell the beautiful
Fatima to the monster Blue Beard. Blue Beard arrives; purchases slaves.
Sister Anne falls in love with Blue Beard and spurns Irish Patshaw. Blue
Beard seizes Fatima and takes her on board his yacht.

Opening Chorus—

- a. "Come, Buy Our Luscious Fruits."
- b. "Oriental Slaves are we."
- c. "We Come from Dalmatia."
- d. Algerian Slave song and chorus.
- aa. Grand Entrance Blue Beard's Retinue. Medley Ensemble.
- bb. Song—"A most Unpopular Potentate." Blue Beard and Chorus.
- a. "Welcome Fatima."
- Song—"I'm As Good as I Ought To Be." Blanche Adams.
- Finale—"Then Away We Go."

Programme Continued on Next Page.

POWERS' THEATRE, New Years Week, JOHN DREW IN "CAPT. DIEPPE."

ILLINOIS THEATRE, This Week, JEROME SYKES IN "THE BILLIONAIRE"

SMOKING

WILL NOT BE ALLOWED
IN THIS THEATRE SAVE
IN THE SMOKING ROOM
—DOWN STAIRS TO
RIGHT OF MAIN FOYER.
Will J Davis—Harry J. Powers

*Iroquois Theater Program for "Mr. Bluebeard"
This copy, showing burns in the margin, was
picked up in the theater after the fire*

THE CHICAGO PLAN, 1909

In the years following the World's Columbian Exposition a number of leading Chicagoans began to see visions of a more orderly, more beautiful city. At first they thought only of connecting Grant Park and Jackson Park with a boulevard, although even that was an undertaking of the first magnitude. Under the leadership of Daniel H. Burnham, however, the improvements contemplated expanded in number and scope and became parts of a general plan. Early in the twentieth century the Merchants' Club and the Commercial Club made the plan their primary activity, and after the two clubs merged as the Commercial Club in 1907, offered substantial civic and financial backing.

The Chicago Plan, published by the Commercial Club in 1909, was the first comprehensive outline of development ever offered to an American city. Instead of limiting themselves to the municipality, large as that was, the planners dealt with the entire area lying within a sixty-mile radius. They foresaw a network of highways around the city, great forest preserves within easy access, and an expansion of existing parks. Within Chicago they looked forward to a wide thoroughfare and a continuous parkway from Jackson Park to Winnetka, a monumental bridge across the Chicago River, broader traffic arteries, numerous diagonal streets, an imposing civic center, and many other improvements each related to the other.

Four months after the publication of the plan Mayor Fred A. Busse appointed the Chicago City Plan Commission and designated Charles H. Wacker, a dynamic civic leader, as chairman. Backed by the Commercial Club, Wacker undertook a campaign of public education. A plan manual was distributed to school children, releases flooded the newspapers, speakers expounded the subject at every opportunity. Chicagoans caught the conception of a better city, and when the time came for voting the bond issues that were indispensable, responded favorably.

Some of the features of the original Chicago Plan have



The Auditorium, northwest corner of Congress Street and Michigan Avenue, about 1900

been discarded as undesirable; others have not yet been realized. Yet the gains have been notable. To the plan the city owes the magnificent stretch of park land from Jackson Park to the river and the northern extension of Lincoln Park, the Outer Drive, the Michigan Avenue and Outer Drive bridges, Wacker Drive, the northern reach of Ogden Avenue, the forest preserves, and many of the smaller parks. Moreover, the Chicago Plan Commission, a continuing body, constantly sets new objectives in the light of changing conditions, and proves every year that with intelligent foresight the city can be made a better home for its millions of residents.

THE EASTLAND DISASTER, 1915

On the early morning of July 24, 1915, the passenger steamer *Eastland* lay at the Chicago River dock adjacent to the Clark Street bridge. The ship was one of four which the Western Electric Company had chartered to take its employees and their families to Michigan City, Indiana, for the company's annual outing. Since the *Eastland* would depart first, crowds swarmed aboard as soon as the gates opened. By 7:00 there were 2500 people on her decks, and the *Eastland* cast off. For no apparent reason the ship listed away from the dock, then righted itself. An instant later it listed again but this time, instead of recovering, slowly rolled over on its side and settled on the mud of the river bottom.

The happy, holiday crowd had paid little attention to the first list, but the second resulted in a mad panic. Some passengers, foreseeing disaster, scrambled up the sloping deck and jumped to the dock; hundreds spilled from the hurricane deck into the river and swam ashore. But those between decks had little chance. The fire and police departments sprang into action and hundreds of volunteers worked heroically, but many of the excursionists died before rescuers reached them. Altogether, 812 lost their lives, making the *Eastland* disaster by far the worst in the city's history.



The Eastland on her side in the Chicago River



*Michigan Avenue in 1914
Looking north from Adams Street*

*Michigan Avenue with its face lifted
Looking north from the Conrad Hilton Hotel*

Photo by Louis C. Williams, 1953



The "booming 'twenties' " are already legendary. Industry, released from war production and stimulated by vast markets for such new products as the radio and electric refrigerator, produced as never before. Automobiles broke out of the luxury class and became necessities. Wages jumped, profits rose, and the country entered an era of free-spending and speculation that finally escaped the limits of reason and ended with the shattering collapse of the stock market in October, 1929.

The 'twenties were the decade of "flaming youth," of 'coonskin coats and hip flasks, of "flappers" and rolled stockings and skirts above the knees. They were the decade of "Big Bill" Thompson and flamboyant city politics. They were the decade of prohibition and the speakeasy, with gangsters like John Torrio and Al Capone giving Chicago a reputation for crime and vice that it has not yet lived down.

But the 'twenties were also a decade of progress. In ten years Chicago changed its face. Over many square miles buildings rose in almost every block. The thud of the pile driver and the machine-gun rattle of the riveter became the normal noises of daily living. Soldier Field, the Shedd Aquarium, and the Adler Planetarium rose to adorn the lake front. The Wrigley Building, the Tribune Tower, 333 North Michigan, the Straus Building (now the Continental), the Stevens Hotel (renamed the Conrad Hilton), and many others transformed the skyline of Michigan Avenue. In the Loop the Burnham Building, the Continental-Illinois Bank Building, and the Board of Trade—to name only a few—towered above the older structures. Nearby the Union Station and the Merchandise Mart spread their masses over city blocks, while in residential districts luxurious apartments reached skyward. The great boom in building, like the great boom itself, came to an end with the crash of 1929, but the city today uses its solid heritage—the structures it produced—in its daily living.

A CENTURY OF PROGRESS, 1933-34

In the late 'twenties many Chicagoans began to make plans for celebrating the city's one-hundredth anniversary. After several false starts civic leaders set up an organization and decided upon an international fair. The theme of the exposition, they agreed, should be the progress of civilization during the century of Chicago's corporate existence. Rufus C. Dawes was selected as president of the Board of Trustees and Lenox R. Lohr the general manager.

After deciding upon a site—the lake front between 12th and 39th streets—the Trustees appealed for funds. In spite of the gathering depression, the response was enthusiastic. The Architectural Commission made broad plans: the buildings would be of a style best suited to the purpose they were to serve; they would embody all new methods and materials of construction; they would depend, for illumination, on artificial light; and they would make lavish use of color. Construction began in the fall of 1930 and continued in the face of mounting predictions of gloom based on the obvious fact that the nation's economy was slipping into stagnation.

The fair opened on May 27, 1933. In great buildings of unaccustomed shapes, their colors sharpened by the placid blue of the lake, visitors walked in fascination before exhibits bringing science, industry, agriculture, home planning, transportation, electronics, and communications within the comprehension of the ordinary person. The Federal Government, twenty-one states and territories, and a number of foreign nations were represented. On its own account the fair offered a breath-taking Sky Ride, a fast-moving pageant of transportation, "Wings of a Century," and an Enchanted Island for children. In the amusement section Sally Rand, and numerous emulators, demonstrated how greatly social attitudes had changed since the days of 1893 and "Little Egypt."

Architecturally, A Century of Progress had relatively little influence in comparison with the World's Columbian Exposition. Yet it unquestionably stimulated interest in mod-



Photo by D. Ward Pease

The Avenue of Flags at A Century of Progress

A Century of Progress by night



ernistic design, and freed architects and designers from many outworn conventions in the use of lighting and color. And for the first time in American history, an international fair paid for itself. Repeated in 1934, *A Century of Progress* drew 39,000,000 visitors, and after discharging all its obligations, was able to divide a surplus among a number of scientific institutions whose purposes were the same as its own.

MID-CENTURY

One hundred and twenty years ago Chicago—not yet even an incorporated town—could count as its population a handful of settlers and a company of soldiers garrisoning a frontier fort. In 1950 the census takers found 3,600,000 persons living within its corporate limits. For sixty years it has been the second largest city in the nation; since 1945 it has ranked fourth among the cities of the world. The metropolitan area—Cook County and five adjacent counties—now has 5,500,000 inhabitants, or approximately 43% of the total population of the United States in 1830.

Because of its geographical location, its industries, and the market it offers, Chicago continues to be the hub of the nation's transportation system. Nineteen trunk-line railroads handle more freight than the rail-freight of New York and St. Louis combined, while passenger train arrivals and departures average more than one a minute. In 1950 the city's three airports—Midway, O'Hare, and Meigs—accommodated more than 350,000 airplane arrivals and departures, serving almost 4,000,000 passengers. Motor trucks provide scheduled service to 24,000 communities. Lakeborne traffic handled in the Chicago Harbor District in 1950 amounted to 49,000,000 tons, twice the tonnage passing through the Panama Canal. Riverborne traffic totalled 14,000,000 tons. Almost 17,000,000 people, not including suburban dwellers, visit the city every year.

A century ago Chicago began to emerge as an industrial center. Perhaps the first great industry was meat-packing: it

continues to rank high in the city's economy. Cyrus McCormick, establishing his reaper factory in 1847, led the way in large-scale manufacturing. With the opening of the Mesabi ore fields in the 1880's the Chicago industrial area became a major steel producer. When the Standard Oil Company opened its Whiting refinery in 1890, another great industry took its place in the region.

All these industries are as important today as ever, yet Chicago's industrial health stems from diversification. The year 1950 found 10,246 manufacturing plants within the city limits, and 12,300 in the industrial area. Between 1940 and 1950 productive capacity increased fifty per cent. In the production of electrical machinery, meat products, telephone equipment, radios and television sets, confectionery, housewares, and railroad equipment the Chicago area leads the nation.

Extensive wholesale trade is the natural result of Chicago's central position in the country's transportation system. In sales volume, that trade grew from less than \$800,000,000 in 1900 to \$15,000,000,000 in 1950. Retail trade, exclusive of the huge mail order business that centers in the city, has increased from \$736,000,000 to \$4,600,000,000 in the same period.

Educationally and culturally, the city possesses many advantages. The University of Chicago and Northwestern, both long-established, have worthy rivals in a dozen other institutions of higher learning. Specialized libraries—the John Crerar in science, the Newberry in the humanities, the Chicago Historical Society in Midwestern history—attract scholars from all over the world. Museums—notably the Art Institute, the Chicago Natural History Museum, the Museum of Science and Industry, the Oriental Institute, and the Chicago Historical Society—bring the treasures of the past and the wonders of the present to millions. A fine symphony orchestra, and the world's best musicians, fill concert halls and open-air theaters the year 'round.

Yet many problems beset the city. Larger and larger num-

bers prefer to live in suburban communities which inevitably become the objects of their civic concern. The cost of municipal services rises steadily without a corresponding increase in municipal revenues. Large areas, once occupied by pleasant dwellings, have yielded to blight or threaten to. Much housing remains sub-standard. Negro citizens to the number of several hundred thousand have yet to be integrated into the community. Traffic congestion increases daily and threatens to choke the city at its center.

These problems have no easy solution, but none is insoluble. A record of growth and achievement, extending over 120 years, should fill all but the faint-hearted with hope for the future.



Courtesy American Association of Railroads

*Not pretty but powerful
An index of Chicago's industrial strength*



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